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The Commonweal

April 29, 1949

Progressives in France

Robert Barrat

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Tension in Germany

Columbia Valley Authority

Expanding Steel Production

VOLUME L 15c NUMBER 3

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Next Week

DIVIDED CITY, by James O'Gara, editor of TODAY: a report from Chicago on a recent battle over segregation in "publicly-aided housing." The Negro sector on Chicago's South Side, which accounts for most of the city's 350,000 Negroes, embodies the most urgent housing needs. Once Mr. O'Gara has presented the desperate situation there, he focuses his report on the "Non-Discrimination Ordinance for Publicly-Aided Housing" introduced by Alderman Carey. How various citizens divided on a complex issue and why—and the dangers arising from the ordinance's defeat.

THE CHURCH IN POLAND, by Alexander Janta, is another very thoughtful analysis. At the moment when the Polish régime is coming out openly against the Church, Mr. Janta, Polish writer and war correspondent, sizes up various strengths and weaknesses. He points to the greater philosophical competence of the Polish Marxists, the long-term identification of Catholicism with various forces of the Right in Poland and the inherent weakness in merely trying to defend acquired rights. To offset this there are certain vigorous Catholic educational institutions still in operation, the **Caritas** welfare organization, a few progressive Catholic periodicals and the enlightened leadership of both Archbishop Wyszynski and Cardinal Sapieha. . . .

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Interested Parties: In Germany

THE PRESSURE in Germany is very difficult to estimate from across the Atlantic. Evidence reaches these shores—or perhaps not evidence, but rumors (which the State Department in Washington plays down in press releases)—indicating that something important is getting ready to happen in Germany. The impression develops that the world, or the limited number of people in it who concern themselves with Germany, are waiting around for an unknown *fait accompli.* An act to release the pressure is needed, and nobody is saying clearly or convincingly what that act ought to be. If there is an act, it will be no agreed and cooperative measure, but the gamble of an interested party.

There are so many and such great forces at work in Germany that the pressure build-up must be, now or later, terrific. Reasonably, all the people and countries affected by the last two major wars are interested parties in the German situation. That means the UN, plus the non-UN nations. But the UN representation is not very direct, deliberately. Germany has been considered first a problem of the last war, a pre-UN tangle which should not be permitted to tie up the new league before it could grow sufficient brain and muscle. The Occupying Powers represent the outside world's responsibility and interest in the conquered territory of the Reich.

The principal change that an observer could see during the past few weeks has been the gathering together of the three western occupying powers into a more unified force, with a more unified German policy which they embodied in the "Occupation Statute" offered to the Western Zones. The picture may be that much simplified, and that simplification may well be the element which is developing an increasing sense of expectancy. Russia is the other Occupying Power, exerting a separate immense force upon the country from outside.

While the over-all American force has been blending more smoothly with the French and English, the American force within itself has been appearing less single. General Clay is reported to have practically broken with the Economic Cooperation administrators. The meaning is by no means clear. Both the Army and the ECA in Germany are, from the American viewpoint, primarily defense organizations. General Clay, the military man, is pictured as stressing German economic recovery for western defense to a degree which upsets the ECA, whose basic interest, contradictorily enough, is supposed to be European economic recovery. It is evident, anyway, that within the United States the German problem is so little discussed and debated that there is no publicly known and understood policy for the various branches of our government, our business men and our other institutions to follow.

The Germans have the most certain and most certainly enduring interest in the condition of their country. But what forces are they exerting upon the situation? Officially, it is almost exclusively the semi-resurrected pre-Hitler political parties which have been given a hand in re-forming the country. In Bonn, it is these many times bankrupted *parties* which are supposed to be creating a constitution. We doubt to the point of denying that the current German political parties represent the German people in their strongest or most creative opinions, sympathies, hopes, or practical effectiveness. When German society was smashed by defeat, it was incorrect for the victors to base so much of the rebuilding job upon the quickly constructed political party organizations. And a "constitution" drawn by the party representatives at Bonn would much better be recognized, as the Socialist Party leaders want it called, as a stop-gap "administration statute."

The fact that we are not yet dealing with Germany on a fundamental and long-term, enduring basis is emphasized in almost humorous fashion by the reactions to rumors that after all this time the Russians will remove the Berlin Blockade. The prospect of reaching this objective of long and expensive and dangerous campaigning causes

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the wildest speculation, and very genuine consternation. The Government says that we are not actually likely to see the blockade lifted in the near future, but it is perfectly apparent that our policy is not broad and firm enough to integrate comfortably even so small a success from the working out of our past policy.

Spreading the Risk

THE VERY MOMENT that "the long awaited balance between steel supply and demand" arrives seems a curious one for new proposals for expanding American steel production capacity. Especially since present facilities are more than able to take care of such major factors as our unusually large construction demands and the largest production of automobiles in history. Add to that the new and restored productive facilities in Europe and the new plants in South America, and the wisdom of expanding our current steel facilities sounds even more dubious.

The question, however, is something more than meeting the demand from day to day—or of finally reaching the point where steel plate and steel pipe can be "shipped in a relatively short time" from the date they are ordered. The point that Louis H. Bean raised at a recent "Economic Action Conference" in Washington is that the nation, if full production and full employment are maintained, will need considerably more steel than it requires now, in from two to five years hence. Mr. Bean, who is an economist for the Department of Agriculture, cited our steady increase in population, and the continued growth of the US economy. He himself estimates the needed increase in capacity to be "at least four or five times" the 3 percent the nation's steelmakers are said to have in mind for the next five years.

Assuming this estimate to be substantially correct for the moment, where are the new facilities to come from? It is hardly likely that the steel companies themselves can be prevailed upon to tie up any great sums in expansion with their present prospects. A second method, that of government steel facilities, suggested not long ago by the Administration, has the questionable character of a resort to statism, a real beginning in the United States of nationalization of industry, of the sort of government production to which there would be no foreseeable end.

The third possibility, which was raised at the Economic Action Conference by Murray Lincoln, President of the Cooperative League, is the development of cooperative steel facilities. Since American co-ops already distribute their own wire fence, farm machinery and refrigerators, they could utilize right now all the production of the steel plant they are considering for purchase as a starter. Then, if they are as successful in cutting steel production costs as they expect to be, they could add to their productive facilities.

In this way, without the steel companies' embarking on a capital expansion which they deem too risky or the federal government's really going into private business, the country's steel capacity might be considerably expanded. And if such generalized estimates as Mr. Bean's should prove to be refuted by further technological magic or other economic factors he now fails to foresee, the cooperative steel experiment would still serve a number of useful purposes. It would throw new light on production costs, eventually provide healthful competition with the steel companies, and indicate to what extent heavy production is susceptible to the cooperative technique in this country. It requires no stirring up of public opinion, no enabling act of Congress. Only that the cooperative leaders decide to make the test on the basis of their current industrial experience and success, especially in the oil industry, where they now own and operate 1,700 oil wells and 200 refineries.

Columbia Valley Authority

THE COLUMBIA RIVER flows from Canada 1,215 miles through the Northwest to the Pacific Ocean. With its tributaries, it drains a watershed in four states—western Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. In this long river basin is located 30 percent, or 30,000,000 kilowatts, of the nation's potential hydroelectric power, of which right now only 10 percent is being utilized. Even this 10 percent is more than all the power produced by TVA.

Half of all the electric power now consumed in the Northwest is produced by two Federal dams on the Columbia—Bonneville and Grand Coulee. These two dams are only part of the power-producing, irrigation, flood control and conservation activities along the river, a job now parceled out to several agencies, principally the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bonneville Power Administration and the Army Engineers.

To unify these activities and agencies, and to draw up plans for the most economic development of the whole river basin, the President has asked Congress to authorize a Columbia Valley Authority. Mr. Truman's message, escorting the bills into both houses, was hardly in the tone of the out-and-out "socialism" feared by western Republican governors, by private power interests, by chambers of commerce, and by all those who watch with increasing discomfort the trend of modern governments to centralized statism, with its restrictions on personal and local freedom and initiative.

Instead the President went out of his way to lay some of these fears to rest. Along with "the unified treatment of the related resources within each natural area of the country," he asked for "the greatest possible decentralization of Federal power and the greatest possible local participation." "The enactment of legislation embodying

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these recommendations will bring government closer to the people—closer to the grassroots. This means government action that will be more responsive to the needs of the people."

In line with this approach, the CVA bill would put Authority headquarters in the Northwest, it would respect states' water rights, and it would encourage private enterprise by following the practice of existing agencies in carrying on construction "by contract as far as practicable."

What the Northwest has been offered in CVA is an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is the chance to bring order and economy into the several operations along the Columbia by adopting an inter-state, Federally-coordinated plan—a necessary practice in the development of great river systems. The challenge is to take up President Truman's offer and to turn their fears of "socialism and statism" into corrective action by setting up local agencies to work with CVA and in this way to keep CVA from becoming a Federal monster grinding local rights under foot.

It would hardly seem reasonable to resist the obvious and inevitable economy of unified planning along the Columbia. It would be wiser to save the money and words wasted on this resistance by giving time and thought instead to ways and means of avoiding a fearful prospect: the invasion of authoritarian controls.

China Deadline Passed

IN CHINA, a whole series of tortuous deadlines were passed during the week after Easter, and the most formidable line of the Yangtze River was approached with new energy by threatening forces. The weakest party to the desperate negotiations in China's civil war—the official Government of Acting President Li Tsung-jen—rejected the "Twenty-four Point Demands" of the Communist war faction, crossing the deadline of April 20 which the Communists set in their ultimatum. The "24 Points" have not been published in full, official form, but they embodied so complete and uncompromising a surrender that the weak and compromising Li Government, defeatist and shockingly undignified in its appeasement and crawling fellow-traveling though it was, still could not find any way to accept. This gives further overwhelming evidence that it was never fundamentally the character of the Chinese legal government—Chiang Kai-shek—which made impossible pacification and incorporation of the Chinese Communists in the nation. It is the character of the Chinese Communist revolutionary movement which has prevented the unity and peace of the country.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang power are almost certainly not surprised. There is plenty of evidence also, that Chiang has conducted a rough and stubborn politics in his "retirement" to the South and in the reorganization of his forces there in the South and in Formosa. A minimum of his power was transferred from him to the theoretically authoritative government he left behind. The force he controls south of the Yangtze has given him a veto power over the futile actions of Acting President Li on the threatened banks of the river. Evidently the compromise which the Kuomintang has been working for is a geographic one. Now again, the armies are poised to set the "realistic" and "practical" line of division.

It was usefully symbolic that the first casualty of the renewed contest happened to be a foreign vessel sailing up the river. The British naval sloop, Amethyst, was hit and grounded in the middle of the Yangtze and of the opening battles. Destroyers sent up for rescue proved the shore batteries to have been fired from the Communist side, and that is doubtless symbolic too.

Burst of Creative Imagination

WHEN SENATOR Ralph E. Flanders in a speech "long in preparation" first suggested, on April 13, the use of guided missiles for bringing propaganda to the Russians, his "proposal was heard in silence by the Senate." Since then no one appears to have taken it up; editorial writers have not so much as favored it with a glance. But the Vermont Senator has returned to the charge—he insists that his vote for ratification of the North Atlantic Pact depends upon simultaneous adoption of his plan to carry propaganda right to the Russian people (April 18).

The Senator takes to task our "sluggish and uncreative imagination," for we have hitherto failed to see that guided missiles and remotely-controlled planes should be used primarily "to rain down from the heavens pamphlets and handbills on the Russian citizens. . . ." Moreover, he warmly advocates the suggestion of a retired psychological warfare officer that "private agencies" and "hundreds of patriotic flyers," whose lands have been swallowed up, could be found to embark on leaflet-dropping missions over the USSR.

This is, perhaps, a colorful way of pointing out the potentialities in cultivating the Russian people and distinguishing between them and the régime which has so long held them in its iron grip. More imagination on the Senator's own part might induce him, however, to abandon these fanciful suggestions. Getting the range on the USSR even with nothing more explosive than handbills hardly resembles a peaceful activity. Inspiring private agencies and patriotic pilots to fly over Russian territory also would look too much like reconnoitering. Until somebody dreams up something considerably brighter than the Flanders plan, we shall have to continue to rely on the Voice of America broadcasts and whatever literature can be smuggled in.

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Christian Progressists

A movement among certain French Catholics . . . its aims and its obstacles

Robert Barrat

THE RELATIONSHIP between Catholics and Communism is a particularly urgent problem in France, where a group of Christian Progressists, organized three years ago, has made considerable headway in recent months. It has several thousand adherents and a weekly journal, and it is far enough developed in several provincial regions to have, in conjunction with the Communists, won several seats at Grenoble in the last local elections.

Despite the warnings of the hierarchy, it is my opinion that the movement has not yet reached its peak, for there are still many young French Christians desirous of change and poorly enough informed on the realities of Communism to swell the ranks of the Christian Progressists still further.

What are the principles of this movement, and how is the reaction of the Church to be explained? Despite several manifestoes and statements of policy in their weekly, the Christian Progressists do not seem to have a body of doctrine or a political philosophy which is very stable or solidly based. Sometimes they say they are Marxists; at other times they issue appeals to all those who are seeking social progress. On some occasions they say people must join the Communist Party, somewhat later that the Party is only one of a number of progressive forces which should be encouraged in France. Many of their members are quite young; they are trying to make up their minds, which may explain their vacillations in tactics.

They strike me as sincere, and I shall outline and analyze their thought as sympathetically as possible. Moreover, I have met their chief leaders personally; what I say is based on actual conversations as well as what they have published.

★

HOW THEN do these Christian Progressists explain their collaboration with the Communists? Their starting point is that the Church several decades ago lost touch with the people, or at least with that sector which is most dynamic, most in need and which bears within itself the seeds of the future: the proletariat.

They acknowledge that in certain countries in Central Europe or South America the Church still has the masses of the people behind her. But, they say, these masses have not yet been liberated: when the day comes that they take real cognizance of their power, the day when these nations become fully industrialized, the Church is in danger of losing these great popular masses even there.

But Christ came on earth for the poor, the humble, the disinherited. It appears hardly appropriate that His Church should one day find herself with no adherents except members of the bourgeoisie. It is therefore important that the Church win back the working masses.

But in order to do that is it sufficient to have priest workers and to embark on new missionary techniques, as is now the case in France and all Western nations? The Christian Progressists do not think so. They say that it is necessary to go much farther and that all economic, political, social and even ideological structures to which the Church is bound must be reexamined because they have been rendered obsolete by the evolution of the modern world.

For example, they assert that the social doctrine of the Church, her conception of the natural law, of the rôle of the State, of family morality, no longer correspond to the needs of twentieth century man because they date from the Middle Ages.

The Progressists go much farther and declare that even theology itself cannot be renewed or offer to mankind that Summa of which it has such need, because Catholic theology is too traditionally bound up with a certain static conception of Truth which is found in Saint Thomas and the scholastic philosophers. According to this traditional conception, inherited from Plato and Aristotle, Truth is a system of ideas which can be confirmed through recourse to contemplation. But the whole progress of modern philosophy from Hegel and the phenomenologists has consisted in demonstrating that there is no truth outside of that which man himself experiences as he produces it and lives it. Truth is not a system of ideas but a reality, almost a way of life.

Let me say at the outset that such language is very appealing to a Christian, since for him Truth is not a rational construction but a Person, Christ, and the only way to discover Truth is to follow in His footsteps.

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The Christian Progressists, in reaching this conclusion that the Church, if she wishes to halt her decline, must not only reject the economic, political and social structures of a world which is on the way out (the capitalist and bourgeois world), also feel that she must even question, in its content as well as its form, the whole philosophical system inherited from Thomism and the theologians of the Middle Ages.

As to the simple believers, they must here and now hasten the arrival of the society envisioned by the socialists—the new dispensation in which the exploitation of man by man will cease. And as there exists in actuality in the West no other authentic revolutionary force than the Communist Party, it is necessary to fight in the ranks of that party or at least in alliance with it.

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LET ME NOW EXAMINE as objectively as I can the attitude and reasoning of this group. They have, to begin with, the merit of stating that Christians should not confuse the defense of their religion with defense of a civilization as temporary in character as all civilizations are and especially one as transitory as capitalistic and bourgeois society. It must not be forgotten that the Popes have frequently condemned the social order which has resulted from capitalism. But the great mass of Catholics appears strangely reticent when there is a question of promoting a new order in which justice and charity would have greater influence than they now do.

Besides, it is good to have people remind us from time to time that the Christian Faith is not equivalent to an adherence to a system of ideas, even if that system is as highly developed and solidly based as Thomism. Systems of ideas may come and go. Christ remains, Who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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ONCE THIS has been said I cannot refrain from expressing my fears about a movement which, along with a fine generosity of soul, gives indications of so much mental confusion and such grave illusions. The attitude of the Progressists seems rather that of doctrinaires who dwell in ivory towers than of men who are well aware of the realities of Communism and of the Church. And all in all I have strong fears that the Christian Progressists, by dint of trying to be progessists, will end by no longer being Christians at all.

I have often heard adherents of the movement argue that the rôle of the Church should be purely spiritual, that she has no business intervening in the world but should leave to laymen, Catholics or not, the task of regulating its course. That sentiment betrays a lack of elementary religious formation which alone can protect the faithful from turning one day to schism or heresy. (A few weeks ago the Catholic Communist group in Italy affirmed its independence on "any question whatever." The French Christian Progressists tell me that they have no connection with that group in Italy and that only recently they have taken pains publicly to state that fact. But I suspect that this declaration was inspired simply by opportunism. It was not so long ago that the Union of Christian Progressists in France published protests in the Communist press against the intervention of the Pope at the time of the Italian elections.)

To be sure, the sort of clericalism which has been in existence in Europe for several centuries, and still exists in certain countries of the New World, is carefully scrutinized in the thought of the contemporary Christian. And there are many theologians who strongly affirm that laymen must not constitute within the Church a flock of sheep whose rôle is simply to obey.

But that is not the same thing as saying that the Church as such has nothing to say about the direction the world takes, that she has no right to judge political and social systems. Indeed she alone knows the final ends of man, his true nature as a being created in the likeness of God and his spiritual destiny. Moreover, in a world in which philosophical systems embodying the wildest aberrations secure a hearing, the Church is the final power, the final constituent society, which can state the Truth about man. Long before Marxism had seen the light of day, she had affirmed the importance of institutions, customs, social structures, in the formation and development of man. To characterize her interventions in the temporal domain arbitrarily as "clericalism"—when such activity is the normal fulfilment of her duty—is to misconstrue the absolute necessity for her magistral rôle in society.

In fact, the Christian Progressists themselves want intervention by the Church in this domain, but they want it in only one direction: against capitalism, liberalism, colonialism, Anglo-Saxon imperialism. If, unhappily, the Church condemns Communism and the fate of the Catholic populace in the countries of Central Europe, then and then alone she is guilty of clericalism in their eyes.

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THE SECOND POINT at which the naivete of the Christian Progressists appears is their conception of Communism. On the level of pure philosophical reflection it is astounding that they have experienced no difficulties when faced with what Berdyaev called the fundamental falsehood of Communism: its atheism. How can anyone claim to propose an ideal for human society when he is mistaken on one of the essential elements that have to be dealt with in the problem: the nature

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of man. Communism may well embody a number of truths. But the monstrous error at the center of the edifice condemns them all to perversion and decay. And that is why the Church has declared that atheistic Communism is a "doctrine which is intrinsically evil."

The Christian Progressists answer this by asserting that there is materialism and materialism, communism and communism, and that if Lenin banished religion from the USSR, Stalin has restored it to its place, etc., etc. For them as for many dialectical materialists, Marxism is but a method of socio-economic analysis, and there is nothing to prevent a person from being a Marxist and believing in an omnipotent God—anymore than it is impossible to be both a Darwinian and a Christian.

I answer them on their own ground of contemporary historical reality. For it is here that they find themselves most hard put. Does Marxism develop historically the way it theoretically should? Is there no other alternative to capitalism than Soviet Communism? Is the USSR truly the fatherland of socialism, that unparalleled society similar to what they envision: without classes or the exploitation of man by man?

At this stage of the discussion it is important to see things clearly, for it will hardly do to exchange a one-eyed horse for a blind one.

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TO PUT THE QUESTION is already to answer it. Who can sincerely deny that Russia today presents a caricature of what the socialist society aims to be? So much so that socialists have said that Russia is today the most reactionary State in the world. Deportations, forced labor, suppression of all human liberties, concentration of power in the hands of a relatively few—the evidence is overwhelming that Soviet Russia is not, is no longer in the forefront of the struggle for liberation of man nor even of the worker. To put an end to the régime of private ownership of the means of production and replace it by collective state ownership, to have installed socialism and suppressed private exploitation of the workers—all of this is insufficient. For in this tragic twentieth century we have paid dearly to learn that there are other forms of economic exploitation. And these forms exist to a greater degree in Russia than anywhere else in the world.

Possibly the Progressists could reply that even if they accepted these criticisms and agreed that Russia has perverted its socialism, that does not mean that it is impossible to achieve socialism in the West. But they are not even brave enough to admit that everything is not going well in Russia in the best of all possible worlds. To dare to raise doubts as to the validity of the Moscow experience is for them clearly proof of a bourgeois and counter-revolutionary mentality. It might be asked what magic vapors accompany Marxist doctrine so as to obliterate at this point every faculty of observation and all freedom of thought. It is a good place to recall these words of Péguy: "It would be difficult to say how much evil the fear of appearing reactionary has done to Christians."

Yes, the world surely has need of Christians who have the courage to dissociate themselves from the established order and denounce the pharisaism of a bourgeois civilization in which Mammon is king, money rules and the humble are scorned. But the world has great need of men who are free—which the Christian Progressists do not appear to be.

After the Sentence

"Some day others shall live better
and happier because we died."

Alfred Delp

ALFRED DELP was a German Jesuit who was executed by the Nazis on February 2nd, 1945. With Helmuth von Moltke, he was tried and sentenced by a Nazi People's Court. The prosecutor was the famous Dr. Freisler.

Since the prosecution could not prove that either von Moltke or Father Delp took any part in the July 20th assassination attempt on Hitler's life, the two of them were charged with treason only on the grounds that they had held meetings and discussions about the possibility of the collapse of the Nazi régime. These discussions were held to determine who would assume authority from the Nazis in the event of a German defeat. In the language of the Court, Alfred Delp was therefore a defeatist.

While he awaited execution in prison, Father Delp wrote a diary and letters to his friends. These writings were smuggled out of prison by a Protestant minister. In a similar manner,

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the letters of Helmuth von Moltke were smuggled out of prison, and a few weeks ago THE COMMONWEAL *published two of von Moltke's letters. When German friends of Father Delp saw them in* THE COMMONWEAL, *they forwarded to us some of the prison writings of Alfred Delp. We present them here, the quiet and moving monologue of a man turning over in his soul the thoughts and feelings he has as he waits for the moment of death.* THE EDITORS.

BEFORE the ride to the sentencing, I celebrated, and received the Sacrament as my last nourishment. Thus I wanted to be prepared, but I am still waiting.

Up to now the Lord God has helped me most magnificently and affectionately. I have not yet been terrified, nor have I broken down. The hour of "the creature" is certainly going to strike though. Sometimes melancholy takes possession of me, when I think of all that I had wanted to do. For only now I have really become human, free inwardly and much more genuine and real, more actual than before. Only now the eye has the plastic view for all dimensions and the health for all perspectives. The abridgement and the stunted growth are being removed. Yes, and so are the people who remain behind.

Yes, and to be quite honest I don't believe in the gallows just yet. I don't know what that is. Maybe a great grace and help of the fatherly God, Who thus permits me to endure the desert, without having to die of thirst in it. During the whole trial proceedings, even when I noticed that no miracle would happen, I was far above it, and untouched by all the events and prospects. Is that a miracle, or what is it? I am face to face with God, somewhat embarrassed, and must make up my mind about it.

All these bitter months of maturity and misfortune stand under a very peculiar decree. From the very first moment I was inwardly sure that everything would be all right. God strengthened me again and again in this sureness. In these last days I have doubted, and thought about whether I have been the victim of self-delusion, whether my will to live has become sublimated in religious imaginings, or what. But all these many perceivable elevations in the midst of tragedy, this security from all blows, this certain stubbornness, which always lets me know they are not going to succeed in the destruction, these consolations at prayer and the Sacrifice, these hours of grace before the tabernacle, these solicited, and again and again given and granted signs—I don't know whether I dare put all this aside now. Shall I continue to hope? Does the Lord God want this sacrifice, which I do not want to deny Him, or does He want the verifications of faith and trust to the utmost point of possibility? As I was being driven to the first trial in Berlin, a picture came to my mind of the unexploded bomb at the Ignatius House, and I heard simply undisputably the words, "It is not going to explode." I have then waited hour after hour, day after day, week after week for the fulfillment. Earlier I believed in the elegant solution through smartness and capability, but that soon ceased.

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AND THIS is the second law, under which these weeks pass by. Everything went wrong that I undertook to help myself. Yes, not only wrong, it was really always a disaster. So now too at the proceedings. The change of lawyers, which at first seemed good, was not good. As the man perceived the anti-Jesuit complex, he told me during the proceedings that of course he, too, was against Jesuitism. That I had sent Freisler the little book, "Man and History," only made him think me clever, and thus all the more dangerous. The things which we had prepared for our defense were interpreted also as new charges against us. The entire external outcome was frustration, shipwreck, and impotence over impotence. And now in the midst of it, again the entirely peculiar nature of our misfortune: that we are still alive today, although we had expected the worst Thursday!

What does the Lord God want with all this? Is it education for entire freedom and complete surrender? Does He want the entire Chalice to the very last drop, right to this these hours of waiting and of this curious Advent? Or does He want the trial of Faith?

What shall I do now, without becoming unfaithful? Shall I continue to hope in spite of the hopelessness? Is it unfaithfulness if I do not? Shall I release myself entirely, and carry out the farewell and adjust myself entirely to the gallows? Is it cowardice or indolence not to do this, and still to hope? Shall I simply remain in freedom, ready for disposal and preparedness? I don't know as yet what really to do, and pray continually for light and guidance. That one must still continually lead proceedings in one's own heart! But they shall be led honestly, under the chairmanship of the Holy Ghost.

When I compare the quiet and unrestrainedness during the days of the proceedings and at the sentence with the anguish which I had many times during the attacks on Munich: my feelings were and are entirely different. So again the question: is this different awareness now the purpose, the goal of this "education," or is this inward elevation and help plainly a miracle?

I don't know. In a normal way there is no more prospect. The chances are entirely spoiled for me, so that even a petition for mercy would have no prospect whatsoever. Is it now folly to hope still,

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or is it imagination, or cowardice, or grace? I sit often there before the Lord, and look at Him questioningly.

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AT ANY RATE I must let myself go thoroughly, inwardly, and hand myself over. It is time for the sowing not the reaping. God sows; some day He is also going to reap. About one thing I shall take pains—at least to fall into the earth as fruitful and healthy seed, and into the hand of the Lord God. And to control myself against sorrow and melancholy, which try to attack me off and on. If the Lord God wants it this way, and everything visible points toward it, then I must go it voluntarily and without exasperation. Some day others shall live better and happier because we died.

I also ask my friends not to mourn, but to pray for me and to help me as long as I need help. And to depend upon it afterwards that I was sacrificed, not slain. I had not thought of it, that this could be my way. All my sails wanted to stand stiff before the wind; my ship wanted a great excursion, the flags and pennants were to remain hoisted proud and high in all storms. But maybe it would have become the false flags, or the false direction, or for the ship the wrong cargo, and a spurious loot. I don't know. I also do not want to console myself with a cheap condemnation of the terrestrial and of life. Honest and straight. I would very much like to continue to live, very much, and especially now continue to produce and make known many new words and values, which I have just now discovered. It has come differently.

It remains only to thank many people for their faithfulness, kindness and love. The Order and the confreres, who have bestowed upon me a beautiful and genuinely spiritual Lebensraum. And then the many genuine people whom I was permitted to meet. Those to whom I refer know it already. Oh friends, would that the hour could strike again, and the day could dawn again, on which we might associate openly and freely for the word and work, toward which we grew inwardly. Remain true to the quiet command, which inwardly called us again and again. Continue to love this nation, which has become in its soul so lonely, so betrayed, and so helpless. And fundamentally so desolate and perplexed in spite of all the marching and declaiming of certainty. If through one man a bit more love and kindness, a bit more light and truth, are in the world, then his life has had a reason.

And those also I will not forget, to whom I must remain a debtor. I am indebted to many for much. Those whom I have hurt, may they pardon me. I have expiated. To those to whom I was untrue and false, may they pardon me. I have expiated. To those to whom I was arrogant and proud and hard-hearted, they may pardon me. I have expiated. Oh yes, in those hours in the cellar, in those hours of chained hands, body and spirit, there much has been shattered. There much has been burned out that was not worthy enough, or of value.

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SO THEN FAREWELL. My crime is that I believed in Germany, even beyond an hour of need and night. That I did not believe in that simple and arrogant unity of pride and force, and that I did this as a Catholic and a Jesuit. These are the values for which I stand here at the extreme edge, and on account of which I must wait for the one to hurl me down: Germany, beyond today, as ever self-renewing reality, Christianity and the Church as the secret longing, the bracing and healing strength of this country and nation. And the Order as the home of men of character, whom one hates if one does not understand them in their free bondage, or if one fears them as a rebuke or as a question in one's own pathetic bondage.

And so I will do at the end, what I so often did with my chained hands, and what I will do ever more lovingly and oftener, as long as I am permitted to breathe. Bless land and people, bless this beloved German nation in its need and torment; bless the Church, that the fountains within her may flow clearer and brighter; bless the Order, that it may remain genuine and full of character and free, true to itself through an unselfish faithfulness to all things genuine and to all missions; bless the people whom I have wronged, bless everyone who was good to me, often too good.

God protect you. Help my aged parents through these difficult days, and keep them otherwise a little in your care. To everyone the Lord God's merciful protection.

Now I will wait here honestly for the Lord God's decree and guidance. I shall trust in Him until they fetch me. I shall strive that this solution and watchword does not find me small and despondent.

The Labor Movement

Labor and the 81st Congress

DO YOU REMEMBER the way you felt last November as you listened to the radio late on Election night or the next morning before you went to work? The announcers had been up all night. Their voices coming over the radio were tired, but filled with the quality of drama and surprise that marked the Big Upset.

Everybody thought it was a victory for labor, a reversal of the trend toward the Right. And so it was. But it was not the kind of victory that labor, and many of the com-

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mentators, thought it was. Only now are we beginning to see how wrong were those who expected Congress to get on board the Truman bandwagon and vote his "Fair Deal" program onto the law-books in a wave of enthusiasm and resounding majorities.

Already the President's civil rights bills, strongly backed by organized labor, have run into a stone wall that may well hold up for the remainder of the session, if not longer. That wall was fashioned when 23 Democrats, nearly all from the South, combined with 23 Republicans, mostly from the Middle West, to upset a ruling of Vice-President Alben Barkley that would have made it possible to shut off the nefarious filibuster with a simple two-thirds vote of all Senators present. The vote was 46 to 41, 25 Democrats and 16 Republicans going down in a losing fight for decency and some kind of logic in our "democratic" institutions.

The reactionary coalition—and this is a case where the often misused word "reactionary" fits like a glove—then passed a rule requiring a two-thirds majority of *all* the Senators, present or absent, to stop a filibuster and permitting an unlimited filibuster on any attempt to change that rule.

The significance of this victory for the powers of darkness was that it served to stop the Truman bandwagon cold. It is true that there were in all this factors, such as the Civil War and the peculiar blindness of Southerners on the racial question, which will not apply to other items on Truman's, and labor's, program. But the psychological effect of that 46 to 41 vote was immense. And the echoes of it will roll back and forth across the Halls of Congress for the next two years at least.

The rent-control bill marked something of a comeback for the Truman forces. It was a clear-cut improvement over the emasculating bill passed by the 80th Congress. The CIO has publicly acknowledged this. But there again, when it came to a test on accepting the full demands of Truman and the northern wing of the Democratic Party, Truman lost. An amendment to give state and local governments the power to remove controls entirely passed the Senate 45 to 35 and the House 227 to 188, with 71 Democrats, mostly from the South, and 156 Republicans on the winning side, while 181 Democrats, six GOP'ers and one American Laborite held out for strict control.

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THE BIG QUESTIONS, of course, remain: what will happen to repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, which both labor and Truman have made such an important part of their program? What will happen to the 75c minimum-wage bill? What will happen to housing, health and education bills that the Administration has proposed and which liberal-labor forces are marshaling their cohorts to put through Congress?

Don't tell anybody, but the chances are only fair for a Truman victory on these measures. Why? Truman's electoral victory over Dewey was 304 to 189, with the Dixiecrat Thurmond getting 38; or 28 states to 16 states to four. The popular vote was closer—23,600,000 to 21,500,000 for Dewey, and Wallace and Thurmond more or less canceling each other out with a million votes apiece. Still Truman's margin was fairly decisive. And yet Congress, elected at the same time by the same people, does not accept Truman's leadership and does not follow his program either in detail or in principle. What is the explanation?

In the April 15 issue of *U. S. News & World Report* there is an analysis of this problem that throws more light on our Congress than anything I have seen. It points out that about 60% of the American people live in cities and so you would think that the representatives of urban areas would dominate at least the House of Representatives, if not the Senate. And urban areas usually elect pro-labor Congressmen.

However, the catch is this. No matter what the states-rights people tell you, our state legislatures are still very powerful. Most of the state legislatures are controlled by non-city elements. New York State is an excellent example, where upstate representatives can easily outvote the men from New York City. (Somebody else will have to produce an explanation for this anomaly.) *And it is the state legislatures that carve out the Congressional districts.* As expected, they carve out districts that favor the rural areas every time.

One result: although they have only 40% of the U. S. population, the rural areas elected over 60% of the present House. By the way, this is a thought that should, but probably won't, make the agrarian calamity-howlers a little better able to face life in the big city.

The Senate is a slightly different story, since its members are elected on a statewide basis. However, most of our states are controlled by rural voters and since a small rural state has exactly the same vote as a big industrial state, the result is about the same. Even so, you may remember that in the last Congress the Senate often served as a liberal brake on the headstrong conservatism of the House. The Hartley labor bill, for example, was much worse than the Taft bill passed in the Senate.

This analysis clarifies a lot of things about our political system, but it leaves some mysteries still unanswered. How the state legislatures became, and remain, so uniformly dominated by the country folk is one of them. Why the farm element in the GOP will take its lead so consistently from the Big Business element is still another. And still another is the question: why are the farmers so predominantly anti-labor? But then you can't expect to get all the answers at once.

Perhaps the end product will be a healthy one. Perhaps the frustration suffered by labor forces in Congress will lead them to concentrate more on the state legislators, who hold the key to Congress through their power over the geography of Congressional districts. That in turn will stimulate interest in local government, steer us away from the centralizing tendency and so on.

But meanwhile, don't let them tell you either (1) that Washington is all-powerful, or (2) that this is strictly an urban civilization, or (3) that labor is calling the shots. And don't expect the Taft-Hartley Act to be repealed in just the way that labor and Truman want it repealed. But more of this in a later installment. JOHN C. CORT.

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New Note in Chile's "Red Zone"

FATHER Robert Voyer, O.M.I., who left the Sacred Heart Parish in Ottawa to bring the social doctrine of the Church to the predominantly Communist population of Chile's nitrate region, received an enthusiastic two-day welcome to his new parish when he was installed as pastor by Bishop Aguilera of Iquique.

The entire population of the Oficina Victoria parish, swelled by a delegation from surrounding areas, met Father Voyer, and three companion Oblates of Mary Immaculate, as they entered the city. Two of the Canadian priests, Father Maurice Veillette, of Quebec, and Father Rene Ferragne, formerly of the staff of the University of Ottawa, will take charge of parishes in neighboring mining villages. Father Albert Sanschagrin, O.M.I., who came to Chile fifteen months ago to aid in social work at the request of Cardinal Caro Rodriguez, Archbishop of Santiago, has been named Deputy Provincial of the Oblate Missions in Chile.

The four priests were conducted in a procession to a huge outdoor altar constructed for the occasion in the public square. The Bishop welcomed the priests in behalf of the population and the diocesan clergy. A torchlight procession preceded a Midnight Mass that night, and an open air Mass, at which Bishop Aguilera delivered the sermon, followed the blessing of a statue of the Virgin of Mount Carmel, Patron Saint of Chile, the next day.

The reception continued with a procession in honor of the Virgin of Mount Carmel in which the natives joined in a ritual dance, once performed in honor of the Sun God by Inca Indians, and since revised by Spanish missionaries for use in honoring the Blessed Virgin. A mass meeting of workers and their families at the local theater climaxed the two-day reception. (Santiago de Chile, 3/26—CIP.)

Surinam and South America

ON HIS arrival in New York from Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana, the Reverend Albert Sanschagrin, O.M.I., Assistant Ecclesiastical Adviser of the Canadian Jocist (Young Christian Workers) movement and Vice Provincial of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Chile, stated that the Guianas are "the least South American of all South American countries," because they are practically devoid of any Spanish and Portuguese influence and have an overwhelmingly African and Asiatic population. In Surinam (Dutch Guiana), for instance, Negroes, East Indians (from what used to be British India) and Javanese (from Indonesia) comprise a majority of the population, with a sprinkling of Europeans (mostly Dutch), Chinese, and American Indians. There are also the "Bush Negroes," descendants of runaway Negro slaves, who live an indescribably primitive life in the jungles of the hinterland. The number of Asiatics is so large that, in the religious statistics of 1941, Mohammedans (Javanese) and Hindus ranked first and second, respectively. Figures in that year were given as follows: Mohammedans, 43,156; Hindus, 34,210; Moravian Brethren, 33,189; Catholics, 31,214; Reformed and Lutherans, 13,582; Confucianists (Chinese), 1,417; Jews, 897; other, 4,417. Bush Negroes and "savage" Indians are not included in these figures. In addition to Dutch, a strange mixture of languages, the "Taki-Taki," is widely spoken in Surinam.

In this amazing melting pot of races and civilizations, the Catholic Church has been doing an excellent work of civilizations and education, Father Sanschagrin declared. In Dutch Guiana, there are flourishing Catholic institutions, lay organizations, and publications, he stated. Catholic schools have such a reputation of excellence that at present about 40 to 45% of the students in Catholic schools are non-Catholics. There are many conversions to the Catholic Church, especially among the Hindus. There are fewer conversions among the Javanese, who are Moslems. A majority of the Chinese living in Surinam are Catholics. Most of the Catholics in Dutch Guiana are Negroes. Surinam (Dutch Guiana), as well as Curacao (the Dutch Antilles), are looking forward to being given self-government. Catholics have organized a political party of their own in both countries.

Speaking of South America in general, the Canadian Oblate Father emphasized the tremendous shortage of priests. In the diocese of Iquique, Northern Chile, where Father Sanschagrin prepared the establishment of the first mission of Canadian Oblate Fathers, the Bishop has only five diocesan priests in parish work, among a population of more than 100,000. Missionaries from the United States and Canada have done a wonderful job in South America, not only by relieving somewhat the consequences of the shortage of native priests, but also by introducing new methods of the religious apostolate.

Asked whether there is not a certain animosity against North American missionaries in South America, Father Sanschagrin stated that he had not noticed any but that he has seen, on the contrary, many signs of genuine appreciation and admiration for their work.

In many ways, Father Sanschagrin declared, South American priests have benefitted from the example of missionaries from the United States and Canada. Contact with them has enabled them to become acquainted with modern methods of the religious apostolate. In some South American countries, a large percentage of the priests come from the upper classes of the population. They have a great deal of good will, Father Sanschagrin stated, but some of them do not understand how farmers and workers feel. According to Father Sanschagrin, American and Canadian priests who carry on a tradition of being close to the people have proved very helpful to their South American fellow priests.

In spite of considerable progress made in recent years, education is still one of the sore spots in most South American countries, Father Sanschagrin declared. Even in Chile, where conditions are better than elsewhere and where compulsory education has been on the law books for 25 years, only about 50% of children of school age are actually attending school. There simply are not enough schools to go around. (New York, 4/15—CIP.)

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The Stage & Screen

South Pacific

THOUGH time and space this week do not permit a detailed discussion of the Drama Critics Circle's awards, it is still necessary to mention that this latest Rodgers-Hammerstein giant received the Musical prize only five days after its opening. With a plurality of 18 votes, it swept far in advance of the six ballots supporting "Kiss Me Kate" and the lone groan favoring "Love Life" delivered by this column. I mean to comment on all of the decisions just as soon as I can, but in the meantime we had better get on to a review of the play itself.

Mr. Hammerstein's and Joshua Logan's book is based on James A. Michener's novel, in turn the winner of the Pulitzer Prize a couple of years ago. The authors have emphasized all the superficial sentimentality of the original in their adaptation, while juggling the characters (as I recall) very little. They have subtitled their piece a "Musical Play," which, in truth, it is: there are no extraneous dancing or singing choruses, all of the action and all of the airs motivate the story; and all *business* is tied together by the device of a "Company Street" marked by a traveller curtain designed again by the ubiquitous Jo Mielziner. The scene is a South Pacific island where some forty-odd skilled players present the story of little Nellie (Navy Nurse) Forbush to us, plus the story of her adored French planter, father of two native children. A sort of sub-story, concerning Marine Lieutenant Joseph Cable and *his* adored native girl, is also wound into the works. Supported by a good number of entirely agreeable Rodgers tunes, some of the incidents emerging from this general plan are highly entertaining. Playing Nellie, Mary Martin has the distinction of being the first actress to wash her hair within sight of a round audience—a novel note; Myron McCormick in some sort of dream-scheme of an "endearing" Sergeant, exhibits the most prodigious hula-hula I have ever seen; a young newcomer, Betta St. John, does an entrancing finger dance in the ingenue role; and, certainly best of all, Ezio Pinza, as powerfully talented as he is wonderfully attractive, creates some adult dimension every time he enters the stage.

However, I must submit that the sum of these scenes honestly seems to me to amount to two hours of unrelieved *corn*. In other words, a great big "Fun War" run by Rover boys and girls to the accompaniment of rumored bullets and no nerves. Whatever the acting excellencies, the piece exhibits neither wit, comment, nor history, and it is implacably sad that a very fine composer is embroiled in it to the extent of remnant pleasantries and no more. Mr. Rodgers is reputed to be a musician who has never imposed on his librettist, but how one wishes, these days, that he might. I suppose it's also important to note that the show has accumulated the largest advance sale ("Allegro"?) ever recorded on the street, and again to underline that it is: A Prize. (*At the Majestic.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Heels Within Heels

FOR CONSIDERATION this week are three new movies in which the leading characters are by no means heroes. Midge Kelly in *"Champion"* is not quite the complete heel that Ring Lardner made him in his original short story, but he is still a bad egg who uses people to his own advantage as he fights his way to top position in the ring. Lardner had nothing good to say about this man who was only outwardly a "champ." Carl Foreman, who wrote the movie's thoughtful script, adds to the original story considerably and makes several attempts to explain Midge's vicious self-centered personality. He does this by showing that most of the people whom Midge hurt were not exactly "nice" in the first place, by showing that in the fight game every man is out for himself and by making Midge the kind of a prize fighter who fights to hit all the guys who ever hurt him. The film makes no attempt to justify Midge's actions, but it skilfully reports Midge's actions and responses to those people who surround him.

Produced by Stanley Kramer and expertly directed by Mark Robson, "Champion" is a first-rate example of cinematic reportage. The acting is good throughout—especially that of Kirk Douglas as this despicable heel who rose to the top, Arthur Kennedy as his crippled brother, and Ruth Roman, Lola Albright and Marilyn Maxwell as the three women connected with Midge's love-life. The fight scenes and the atmosphere surrounding this sport have been displayed with utmost realism. No doubt if this film had to be made, it had to be made with all this vicious brutality; but this same viciousness pervades the entire picture and practically all the people in it; and one questions the value, in even a well-made example, of a portrait that has little to recommend it other than its realism.

One questions much more about *"Flamingo Road"* which has neither realism nor good cinema to recommend it. It starts well enough as the tale of a carnival gal (Joan Crawford) who refuses to be pushed around by life—life being in this case three men, particularly a sheriff (Sydney Greenstreet) who hits a new low in evil politicians; his deputy (Zachary Scott) who weakly follows the sheriff's dictates and deserts Joan when she needs him; a big-shot politician (David Brian) who plays along with the bad boys up to a point, also walks out on Joan (because of her former interest in Scott) but turns out to be a pretty good guy when he returns to stick by this woman when she is charged with murder. Obviously this plot is like an old-time thriller in which you hiss the villains; the trouble is, however, you find yourself hissing Joan too, whose motives are not much better than those of the unsavory men who mess up her life. The dialogue in this melodrama gets a bit silly at times, and needless to say so does the action. Perhaps the "cruuel" sheriff is right when he sneers to Joan: "I should have spit you out the first time you got between my teeth."

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"Sister, we live in an evil world," says Cesare Borgia (Macdonald Carey) to Lucretia (Paulette Goddard) in *"Bride of Vengeance."* And, sister, that puts it mildly; the world that is displayed in this fancy-dress movie is a travesty on what went on in Italy several centuries ago. Cesare persuades Lucretia to marry Alfonso D'Este (John Lund) to get revenge on Alf and to open Ferrara for Cesare's armies. You know very well that Lucretia will fall for her husband (immediately after dishing him up some poison) and thus ruin her brother's plans. So she does—but not until you sit through a long and tedious costume piece chock full of villainies that couldn't be more ludicrous if the Marx Brothers perpetrated them. Sister, the world, evil or good, has nothing to do with this movie.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Communications

MODERN GERMAN WRITERS

Stuttgart-Degerloch
Germany

TO the Editors: THE COMMONWEAL's intelligent and large-minded handling of German problems in the last years has won for your periodical much admiration among its German readers, Catholics as well as non-Catholics. I had the chance of contributing to these articles in 1946 and 1947. Your giving large space to modern German literature (March 11, 1949) is to be appreciated as a token of your sincere interest in finding the truth about our country. This truth is rather complicated, and I think no man and no woman inside or outside Germany is able to find out the whole truth. I ask you to regard this letter as a humble contribution to that whole truth, as a correction of some errors unavoidable for a writer who obviously had not the chance to observe the development first hand.

I write these lines as a German and as a critic. As a German I have to make some general remarks. The goodwill exercised to rehabilitate German intellectuals must not lead to any high-colored picture as given in the article of Dr. Fischer. "Belles-lettres were" *not* "flourishing," as he says they were at the time before the occupation. Had they been flourishing, nazism would have been a much more harmless régime than it was. "New and remarkable works of well-known authors" were more than "scarce," the paralyzing effects of terror being felt by all those gifted with character, as well as literary talent. Dr. Fischer mentions two books of Ernst Juenger, and there may be added "Der Grosstyrann und das Gericht," by Bergengruen, and the historical novel "Das Muschelhorn," by Hans Leip, and "Wir sind Utopia," a story out of the Spanish civil war by Stefan Andres, maybe a few others too. The rest was silence, propaganda, or "Kitsch."

Everybody who experienced those years in Germany knows that it could not have been otherwise. As for the "abundance of forceful younger talents"—well, all German critics agree upon the already proverbial "emptiness of our desk-drawers" at the end of the war and the rather depressing picture of German cultural life of today. It cannot be otherwise, unless you suppose the Germans to have hearts of steel and intellects of india rubber. We are glad they have not. They proved to be—with the remarkable exception of Elisabeth Langgaesser—unable to tackle the experiences they underwent: the air-raids, the displacements, the break-down of their historical point of view.

Almost all writers who tried to deal with the experiences of the last decade failed, and we honor this failure as proof of the depth of human sorrow and sincerity, although we complain now of the poor state of our literature. (The same condition is true for France, as French publishers have told me.) The best symbols of that time and the best reportages were written by emigrants: Thomas Mann's "Dr. Faustus," and Plievier's "Stalingrad," and Anna Segher's "The Seventh Cross." For those having lived abroad the experiences of the Germans who resisted the spell of nazism are hard to realize. They had to suffer the threat of the Gestapo as well as (with the rest of Germans) the threat of the air-raids. They knew some of their cousins were murdered in Poland, while other cousins fell in action with the German army in Poland. . . .

It seems quite natural that such experiences can be expressed, if at all, only in a more or less chaotic form. Diaries written in the last period of the war are perhaps their most genuine witnesses (Rinser, Vermehren, Haecker). The struggle for an artistic form wide enough to express those experiences is the most characteristic feature of German literature today. From this point of view, it may be instructive for the literature of the world. That seems much more important than its preserving certain general human traits. This latter is true too, but making it the point of a general review as Dr. Fischer does is like looking for the "classical forms" of Raphael in a picture of Breughel. . . .

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Well, these are opinions about German literature. Now for facts. Dr. Fischer emphasizes Elisabeth Langgaesser's "Christian emotion" which "came over her" during the nazi period, and which, he says, "deepened her inner life." From the general, human point of view this may be true—we hope so for all of us. But as a writer, Elisabeth Langgaesser has been a Christian author from her very beginnings. True, one may say that her prose as well as her poems have been "full of exorbitant sensuality and pagan mythology," but never for the sake of this sensuality and this mythology in itself. The central topic of this poetess has always been that word from Saint Paul: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Expressed in terms of mythology, it was the agony of the transformation of Greek deities into the Christian life of salvation. This structure has been deepened by the "thirteen cursed

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years," but it has not changed. If she "formerly praised the fertility of the bios," she does the same now; and D. H. Lawrence seems a middle-class teacher compared to her. But now and then only, in order to show the myth's hidden damages, its wickedness and its longing "donec recquiescat in te." If one does not see this central point of her work, the resistance, and the longing of creation at the same time, her work, of course, must appear as chaotic. As soon as one realizes that her last novel, "Das U-S," deals with religious realities not bound to natural time, but bound together by a spiritual destiny beyond time, it no longer seems "a collection of most skilfully written fragments . . . insufficiently connected by some lofty ideas." Taking religion as a reality, not as an idea, is the new and revolutionary quality of this novel, which is, therefore, the contrary to all "uplifting" religious literature. As for her "admonishing us . . . from the heights of the ethos," as Dr. Fischer says—I never saw an admonishing line in her verses. And seeing it would rather disappoint me.

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The second point of fact I would like to correct concerns Ernst Juenger. It is not only the "fossils of the Morgenthau period" who do not like his come-back. There are, of course, German democrats who have fallen victims to the fascination of Juenger's refined language; but most of them deeply distrust his too versatile conversion to Christianity, European federalism and humanism. We feel his Christianity too much akin to that of the *Action Francaise,* that is, a diplomatic exploitation of religion; his European idealism a camouflage for the good old German hegemony, and his humanism an aestheticism, egotistical and aloof in its core.

To verify these one would have to make a very exact analysis of Juenger's pamphlet "Der Frieden," very widely circulated among nationalists after the war. I have made such an analysis in the *Review of Politics* (July, 1946). This suspicion is not based on Juenger's books on World War I, as Dr. Fischer suggests, but on his very skilful and demagogic books "Der Arbeiter" and "Die totale Mobilmachung," which happened to come just in time to serve as theoretical bridges to National-Socialism for high-brow intellectuals in the years around 1933. The effect of these publications for the development of the Third Reich cannot be over-emphasized. Judging from them Juenger must have been either blind or an opportunist. For intellectual blindness, however, he is much too clever. I am afraid Dr. Fischer's zeal makes him overlook the situation of the German authors and the specific tasks and chances they have. He looks for traditionalist values; and his findings therefore are rather pell-mell. It is written that you should not put new wine in old bottles. It was not wine we got all these years, but vinegar. Just for that reason, very new and strong bottles are needed. Maybe with their help the vinegar will turn into wine.

DR. CLARA MENCK.

Poetry Chronicle

HENRY RAGO

Collected Poems. Siegfried Sassoon. Viking. $3.50.
Collected Poems of William Empson. Harcourt. $2.50.
The Charity of the Stars. John Heath-Stubbs. Sloane. $2.50.
The Forever Young. Pauline Hanson. Swallow. $1.50.

THE BOOK that Siegfried Sassoon's poetry adds up to should be a sobering experience for those who have never learned Ezra Pound's primer lesson: "Literature is what is printed on the page." I am not sure what went into making Mr. Sassoon the most widely remembered poet of the first World War. There are some obvious explanations and they will be implicit in what I have to say about the poetry; but the fundamental point, I think, is that none of his admirers has ever read him: they think they read him, but they are thinking of everything except the poetry while they were looking right at it. It seems rather ungracious perhaps but you have got to hold a poet to his job, and you cannot let sentimental associations do the job for him.

When Mr. Sassoon's work is looked at that closely (and it's not really unsympathetic to look at anything that closely if you like it—the more you like it the more you will want to discover in it) there is not a single poem of the first order in these 257 pages; there are only a handful that are worth looking at even for the first time, and there are dozens and dozens which are downright offensive. The melodrama is extremely cheap, and only the more inexcusable because it exploits the greatest human suffering of our time (let me be obvious with a second principle: we dislike sentimentality precisely because we treasure our sentiments). The repeated trick here is in those heroics which divert small boys from their popcorn in an afternoon movie—the tight-lipped farewell, the weatherbeaten old major who quotes from "The Walrus and the Carpenter" while waiting for the zero-hour, the silent handshake that says, "Don't worry, old man, I'll take care of that lovely little rose-garden in Sussex." The device should not be confused with irony: irony faces what must be faced; it is used not to escape suffering but to meet and undergo suffering. What we have here is the frivolous distortion of the reality that would make irony necessary. The war is not confronted as Wilfred Owen confronted it, or suffered as he suffered it. Instead it is made into a Rugby football match and its tragedy resolved in terms of the public school code; and in a number of poems the subject is wrung for even damper pathos because it turns out that the code doesn't apply (here you have to be especially careful and remember that the code was Mr. Sassoon's idea and never yours in the first place).

There are those who might save this poetry for its versifications. All I can say is that the meter is dull and unimaginative, innocent of any contrapuntal effects and on a dead line with an unvaried grammar. Start the beat going and anyone can take it from there. Well, for all these meditations one excerpt will do. It is the last stanza of the poem, "To Any Dead Officer":

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Goodbye, old lad! Remember me to God,
And tell Him that our Politicians swear
They won't give in till Prussian Rule's been trod
Under the Heel of England . . . Are you there? . . .
Yes . . . and the War won't end for at least two years;
But we've got stacks of men . . . I'm blind with tears,
Staring into the dark. Cheero!
I wish they'd killed you in a decent show.

★

TAKE WILLIAM EMPSON'S poetry for a refreshing contrast. Mr. Empson accepts his subjects in the round, in all their stubborn details—beetles and ants, a man diving, a Japanese train in Manchuria, non-Eculidean geometry. Without over relying on anything but the flexibility of his language he moves your mind to analogies, illuminations, and sudden antics of all sorts. The amusement, which is sometimes high enough on the esthetic scale to become what the Greeks would call *wonder,* is in the way he insinuates this motion into the poem. See what he does with, of all things, a woman brushing her teeth over a lake (in "Camping Out"):

And now she cleans her teeth into the lake:
Give it (God's grace) for her own bounty's sake
What morning's pale and the crisp mist debars:
Its glass of the divine (that Will could break)
Restores, beyond Nature: or lets Heaven take
(Itself being dimmed) her pattern, who half awake
Milks between rocks a straddled sky of stars.

Soap tension the star pattern magnifies.
Smoothly Madonna through-assumes the skies
Whose vaults are opened to achieve the Lord.
No, it is we soaring explore galaxies,
Our bullet boat light's speed by thousands flies.
Who moves so among stars their frame unties;
See where they blur, and die, and are outsoared.

I do not think that Mr. Empson's poems are always thus complete. Sometimes he does not take the subject a sufficient distance to suggest a pattern (I am assuming here that even the briefest lyric must have an implicit "action" and that that action should run a complete course analogous to the kind of thing we find in full-length drama). A number of Mr. Empson's poems simply don't get into a climax—they talk about something and after a bit they let go of it. One is not sure that the poem couldn't have continued indefinitely or that it couldn't have ended sooner. But what is more important to say is that, whether ultimately successful or not, there is not a single poem in this book (I balance my dark universal negative about Mr. Sassoon) that is not exciting to read.

★

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS is a young English poet whose work has attracted attention in London during the past few years. I find his poems admirable in their virtuosity; they offer some very skilful adaptations of period-manners or of period "atmosphere," and a few uncommonly sensitive translations; but when they attempt to handle a direct experience on their own, they seem only to be pleasant little inventions—which is to say that they are not inventive enough, either in speech or in dramatization.

Mr. Heath-Stubbs does not trust himself to travel without some pretty heavy paraphernalia, most of it operatic; the poems are suffused with stage-lighting, and the waltzes and gothic castles seem bad nineteenth century. Am I unfair here? Would I have admired the "Nine Gothic Ballads" if Yeats had done them? No, I think Yeats would have given them an accent of personal concern. It is a temptation for a critic to say at this point that Mr. Heath-Stubbs has all the talents he needs but that he lacks "something." That is nonsense. He has a lot of talent but not enough to do more than re-write what has already been written. The personal concern I talk about is not a matter of the poet's morals or personality (I don't wish to say that these things don't matter but I'm not talking about them here). It is simply what comes through to the reader when a poet goes beyond everything that was hitherto thought of as "literary" and makes literature out of an unsuspected subject or an unsuspected language or both. The problem is still literary: it is a matter of invention; it is a matter of talent.

★

WE MIGHT CONSIDER, again for contrast, a much more modest book, Pauline Hanson's *The Forever Young.* It is a sequence of closely linked quatrains celebrating a private sorrow and a reconciliation. The private sorrow remains private: the chastity of Miss Hanson's method will allow no spilling over of the extra-poetic into the poetic. What we have is a clean, poetic realization in tension with what it cost to get it there. The material is dramatized, as "The Charity of the Stars" is dramatized. But Miss Hanson refuses any trappings or false atmosphere. She takes nakedness itself for a drama—a drama of refusal—and formalizes her story into a kind of intellectual ordeal. The thought winds painfully through tight paradoxes and tortures of syntax to achieve its final clarity; not only the end of the poem but the end of each quatrain means an endured contradiction:

The heart that breaks to say your obsequies
Will break again, for it will ask its ease
Of you, and asking, learn how poor a thing
Love is—if love is less than lover was.

Of the sixty-four quatrains there are, of course, exceptions to this strict grace of meter and argument and this quiet control of rhyme. Sometimes, too, the compression is more than English can bear without getting clogged up. (But how good it feels to be warning a modern poet that her grammar can get *too* interesting! If Miss Hanson has not studied the Greek and Latin poets, she is one of the few American poets who do not need to.) Sometimes her calculated austerity holds her vocabulary to unfair limits, and her combinations of the words "death," "life," "time," "eternity," "love," and "memory"—so worn by sentimental usage in the hands of others—can sound like something close to the banal. But most of the time, *The Forever Young* is that miracle, the combination of purity and toughness—and I count it among the distinguished books of the year.

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Books

The City of Reason. Samuel H. Beer. Harvard. $4.00.

IN *The City of Reason* Professor Beer has attempted the kind of thing which academic people are often considered incapable of—an original contribution to thought instead of to learning. Or, if the achievement is not strictly original thought, it is an original application. He has taken the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead and has erected upon it a theodicy and a politics.

The publisher describes the work as a philosophy of liberalism; and it could well be regarded as an effort to find some solid content for that usually empty and deceptive expression. One may be sure that a few who have freedom at heart are dismayed by the shallowness of many who carry the liberal banner; and Professor Beer is trying to show that liberalism rests upon something more fundamental than the position from which certain liberal weeklies tend to argue. It is not easy to gauge his success.

I imagine that the reader will be first of all impressed by the amount of conservative or even "reactionary" doctrine that the author finds it necessary to put in his foundations. He quotes approvingly Whitehead's statement that "The theory of induction is the despair of philosophy"; he cites the presence of wholes in nature as proof that the world is neither chaotic nor purposeless; he even declares that the social scientist must take the soul seriously. His own liberalism rests on a principle that the world is creative, and his theodicy on the idealist premise that "nothing is lost."

He accepts Whitehead's basic picture of the universe as consisting of (1) an infinite conceptual realization, (2) the free physical realizations in the temporal world, and (3) the ultimate unity of the first two. These are described as equivalent to the Primordial Nature of God, the temporal world, and the Consequent Nature of God. Accordingly, through a process to which Whitehead gives the name "concrescence" everything is developing toward a Saving Order.

The structure seems weakest to me in the doctrine of final cause. In order to leave the universe creative, Whitehead rejects the concept of a limited number of "forms" or "ends." This universe is realizing a pre-existent potentiality, yet its creations, which are actualizations of the potentiality, are "genuinely novel." There appears to me a contradiction here which is not entirely clarified by the quotation from Niebuhr to the effect that "eternity will fulfill and not annul the richness and the variety which the temporal process has elaborated."

After saying that this work represents a piece of independent thinking, I must add that it suffers somewhat from the scholar's inveterate habit of taking a text solemnly. When the author speaks of the doctrines of other men, there is a certain tediousness of elaboration which one associates with the study. He has moreover a tendency to corroborate his own points by appeals to celebrated names and celebrated systems. This is the way academic theses are substantiated, but it is not the way documents of deep insight are written.

Every generous man must applaud the intention the book represents, but it would be sanguine to prophecy a great influence. RICHARD M. WEAVER.

Goethe's World as Seen in Letters and Memoirs. Edited by Berthold Biermann. New Directions. $5.00.

SINCE ON AUGUST 28th the civilized world will celebrate Goethe's two hundredth anniversary, publishers are hastily bringing out books by and on Goethe. Mr. Biermann offers a selection of the rich autobiographical documents written during the eighty-two years of this productive life. He presents excerpts from recollections by Goethe's mother, excerpts from Goethe's own autobiography *Truth and Poetry,* from his minor autobiographical writings, from the thirteen volumes comprising his diaries and from the piles of letters from and to Goethe. He also presents excerpts from memoirs of Goethe's visitors, especially those of Englishmen and Americans. Some of the aforementioned material has been translated for the first time into English.

The reading of this source material will be a greater help in bringing the man Goethe to life than many second-hand biographies by zealous professors.

Most of the readers will know the beautiful poem "Uber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh" which the poet wrote with pencil on the wall of the little hunting lodge of the Kickelhahn, a peak in the Thuringian Forest. He was a man of thirty years when he wrote, amid the silent woods, this poem ending with the line: "You, too, will soon find rest." It was not so soon. Fifty-two years later, on his eighty-second birthday, the last he was to see, Goethe revisited the Kickelhahn. Mr. Biermann translates the touching report which Johann Christian Mahr, a mine supervisor, gives of their visit: "With vigorous strides he walked along the crest of the mountain through rather high bilberry bushes to the two-storyed hunting-box, well-known to him, built of timber and planks. . . . Goethe reread the short verse and tears were running down his cheeks. Quite slowly he took his snowwhite kerchief out of his darkbrown coat, dried his tears and said in a soft woeful voice: 'Yes, wait, and you too will soon find rest!' Then he fell silent for half a minute, looked once more out of the window into the sinister dark fir woods and turned towards me with the words: 'Well, let's go again!'"

Of the most interesting conversations, those with Eckermann, his most devoted secretary who knew best the art of making Goethe talk, Biermann gives only a very meager selection. This was presumably done because New Directions intends to bring out soon a revised translation of Goethe's complete *Conversations with Eckermann.* MAX FISCHER.

Portrait in Two Colours. Stuart B. Jackman. Scribners. $2.75.

DURING three and a half war years as dispatch rider and truck driver for the Royal Air Force in the Persian desert, Simon Calder kept intact his dream of home. Yet when "England was large on the beautiful horizon," when he was invalided home, back with the familiar sounds and smells, back with his own people, he could not break through to them. Home had become the dream. He was "in a glass prison" outside watching, wondering why he had gone, and what he was to do now that he was back. What he discovered was the chance to do what he wished, the opportunity that is the opportunity of the living.

In the direct speech of his generation, in words of bare bones, Stuart Jackman has written a memorable first

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novel. There is nothing negative about *Portrait in Two Colours*. There is a positive solution for Simon Calder's dilemma, as unobscure, as spare, as forthright as Mr. Jackman's prose, and as strong.

Like his hero, Mr. Jackman is home after service in the Persian desert. Also, like his hero, he resumed his theological studies after the war, now being the pastor of the Congregational Church in Barnstaple, Devon. It is to be hoped that his duties permit Mr. Jackman to write another novel soon. We could all do with more of the fresh warm air that comes through the window he has opened.

MARGARET MARTIN CLARKE.

Jean Fouquet and His Time. Paul Wisscher. Reynal & Hitchcock. $10.00.

IF JOAN OF ARC trod the meadows seeing visions, Jean Fouquet would reside at the very court she had fortified and become the first great French painter. But where Joan had stormed the walls as a warrior, Fouquet could celebrate a period of greater tranquillity. France having been reunited, his paintings would not, like the Chronicles of Froissart, ring with the clash of armor or churn with the turmoil of men swelling over a rampart, but pause to taste the good French earth and to peer in curiosity at the human beings inhabiting it.

Something tart and solid informed this French artist. Born in 1420, he had completed his training by 1440 and then produced those manuscript illuminations M. Wisscher well describes as his "Grand Testament." Ostensibly devoted to religious subjects, these works actually incorporated a yeasty glimpse of much that was domestic or even rural, though elegant. Mid-wives bustle about a bedroom, peasants behold a nativity, provincial funerals are followed—all as if by an eye depicting a life never examined before. A medieval spirit, one might say, still imbued the "text," but the individual reading was more realistic and even secular in its emphasis. These works, which ably supplement the famed *Hours of the Duc de Berri,* still stand among the treasures of French manuscript-illumination. Scarcely done with these, Fouquet visited Rome, saw there the newer men of the Italian Renaissance, transplanted their portals and perspective distances into his own efforts and changed considerably. He did certain illuminations to the tales of Boccaccio. Settling at Tours and marrying, he later produced the altar-pieces and portraits because of which he is designated the founder of French painting.

Though few in number, these works are well regarded throughout the world, one in particular, *Etienne Chevalier and his Patron St. Stephen,* having been exhibited last summer from the German collection at the Metropolitan. Also much esteemed are his hardheaded self-portrait and his decidedly atrabilious interpretation of Charles VII. It would be hard to surpass these as portraits. Somewhat less compelling was his principal altar-piece, the *Pieta of Nouans,* perhaps because he could not lose himself in a larger inspection.

The present book, besides these capital works of Fouquet, includes also reproductions from his contemporaries and successors, notably Jean Colombe and Jean Bourdichon. But what a difference! Fouquet, starting from a somewhat stiff Flemish idiom and then conjoining a note of Italian courtliness, always imparted a French tang and flowed with the liberating current of a rising popular life. These others narrowed, tightened, and lived more at the surface. They could not supersede him as delineator *par excellence,* investigator of character, and sure recorder of a new day in the national life. As such, he issues forth even more forcefully in the current study, which is a model in economy of text, clarity and abundance of reproductions, and charming taste in the color plates. Fouquet is honored by such a book—and once more reinvigorates by the illumination he produced after a long time of darkness.

JEROME MELLQUIST.

Immortal Diamond: Studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins. Edited by Norman Weyand, S.J. Sheed & Ward. $5.00.

"THE CAPACITY for writing poetry," said T. S. Eliot, "is rare; the capacity for religious emotion of the first intensity is rare; and it is to be expected that the existence of both capacities in the same individual should be rarer still." Perhaps I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis and William Empson can be forgiven for their emphasis upon the purely technical innovations and complexities of Hopkins' verse. From eleven fellow Jesuits one expects at once more biography and more scholarship (more analysis of the acknowledged debt to Scotus and *The Spiritual Exercises*)—and especially more emphasis on the religious intensity which informs the poems.

The quality of such a set of papers as make up *Immortal Diamond* is bound to be uneven and repetitious. However, one can quarrel with the editorial emphasis that permits seven out of the eleven essays to concern themselves with the same sort of technical hair-splitting that the New Criticism has made its province. Surely little new remains to be said about "sprung rhythm" and it is a little late to attack Hopkins' theories of Greco-Roman verse, while Fr. Schoder's explanation of *The Windhover* carries the pedantry of Leavis yet one stage further into obfuscation.

Having registered this single complaint one can acknowledge a great deal for which to be grateful here. Fr. Carroll's introductory essay on "Hopkins and the Society of Jesus" combines restraint with understanding; Fr. Burns and Fr. McNamee are profound in their analysis of Hopkins' aesthetic-ascetic dualism; and Youree Watson's line-by-line explanation of *The Loss of the Eurydice,* with its warmth, insight and scholarship will remain a major contribution to the understanding of Hopkins.

DONALD DEMAREST.

Sienese Paintings. Introduction and Notes by Tancred Borenius. Pitman. $1.95.

THE FLORENTINE and, to a lesser extent, the Venetian school of painting, have by sheer numbers of works produced eclipsed all other schools of Italy. Qualitatively, too, they have created pictures which outshine anything created elsewhere during the Renaissance. Nonetheless, other cities besides Florence and Venice have had artists of a quality not to be disregarded in any consideration of that remarkable art epoch. Siena was one of these cities; while unable to boast of a Michelangelo or a Raphael, a Giorgione or a Titian, it has yet produced a number of geniuses whose paintings are a part of the glory of the Renaissance.

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In this tastefully printed book, we have ten exquisitely done full-page reproductions in color of the work of certain Sienese painters in the National Gallery of London. There is Duccio's famous *Annunciation,* Ugolino's *Deposition,* Niccolo di Buonaccorso's *Marriage of the Virgin,* Sassetta's *Charity of Saint Francis and His Vision* and *Saint Francis' Treaty With the Wolf of Gubbio,* Matteo di Giovanni's *Madonna of the Girdle,* and four other paintings of sacred subjects by other artists.

Tancred Borenius supplies not only an interesting Introduction on the Sienese school but also notes for the individual paintings.

JOHN COURNOS.

Alien Land. Willard Savoy. Dutton. $3.00.

THIS IS a study of pain suffered by Kern Roberts, the light colored boy with a Negro grandmother rejected as a fellow human being both by the Southern white man, and the equally race-snobbish black man. Behavior patterns of both races in this domain, abominable violations of the natural law ranging from callous, subtle cruelty to brutality and hot violence unbearable to read about, have been observed and recorded with skill and justice by a young Negro lieutenant now serving as Public Relations specialist with the Air Force.

As a novel it does not come off. Original style rarely penetrates journalistic formula. The love story is contrived. Too many of the essential characters, including the hero, lack a clearly discernible will, and their images evaporate.

Real merit lies in the villains, the mouthpieces of whatever is morally out of joint about the different settings in which Kern Roberts is acted upon as he grows up on both sides of the color line. School children in Washington persecute him for being "half-white," and for disloyalty to the Negro race when he identifies his white mother's Negro murderer in court. When he passes for white at a New England boarding school, a Southern boy draws his full measure from a correct intuition. His crusading father, hero to the Negro, repeatedly makes his son's welfare as a human being a burnt offering to the cause of the "Freedom League." A man really inhabited by Satan is the cracker sheriff of an Alabama Negro college town, champion of white supremacy and "keeping them in their place" by wanton tyranny, crime and murder in a community that includes a Negro intellectual elite. If the evil in this man is indeed exaggerated, it is in the direction of the ugly truth.

Introspection focused on what must have been personal experiences of the author illuminates Kern Roberts's agonies in each intolerable situation. The intensity and honesty here will probably give perverse pleasure to the multitude of confirmed sadists who make it their business to keep the wounds open and smarting. It may plant a sense of sin and the beginning of repentance in the more plastic younger generation of race bigots if they ever read the book. The too easily ignored fact that human feelings lie behind faces that are black, and faces that are various shades of light brown, is registered beyond argument. I wish the love in it rang as true as the hate. The record of Joe Louis's firm dignified protests against Jim Crow in the Army seems to belong to a higher order. Baroness de Hueck's Friendship House

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is a robust fountain of fraternal charity and positive good example which makes this kind of sociology sophisticated and ingrown by comparison. I hope Willard Savoy includes some of these things in his frame of reference when he writes another book. He has some of the ingredients of a great talent, and is destined for a large public.

PETER WHITE.

Lucifer with a Book. John Horne Burns. Harper. $3.50.

JOHN HORNE BURNS has written quite an attack on, specifically, private schools and their inmates, and generally on the world at large. Four years in the service and another four spent teaching in a boys' preparatory school made him sufficiently bitter to produce *Lucifer with a Book*. His hero, too obviously Mr. Burns himself, teaches school at a time when he has to make an adjustment to a society with which he has lost touch and which he finds, as does any sensitive man who has seen the worst of the war, slightly distasteful. The society with which he comes in contact as a teacher is both sickening and shocking. As a result this book is an "expose" of an exclusive private boarding school, The Academy, otherwise known as Town and Gown.

Mr. Burns tells what actually goes on in some of the prep schools of today, and he has told the worst and the most incredible of it. He reveals the homosexuality which exists not only among the students, as a result of their frustrations (of which parents are so often unaware), but among the teachers as well, due to *their* frustrations. He reveals too, and this is far more important, the cruelty, the psychotic aggression existing among and between students and teachers as a result of these frustrations.

The two protagonists, Guy Hudson and Betty Blanchard, are about the only characters who are not caricatures. Both are teachers, a veteran and an ex-WAC, both horrified by what they find in the Academy, and with the exception of three students with whom the author finds himself in sympathy, they are the only normal—or nearly normal—human beings in the book. They too suffer from their own private repressions—Hudson finds haven for his jangled nerves and his mental unrest only in the arms of a woman, any woman he admits.

The most viciously scourged character, Mr. Pilkey, the headmaster, is hated by Mr. Burns, who, strangely enough does not have the depth to understand him. Mr. Pilkey is a despot, a tyrant in the school which he controls. He is a man of such definite ideas—most of them good, at that—that no matter how radically the world changes, he can never change. Consequently he is slaughtered by the author, because from the standpoint of Mr. Burns it is absurd to suppose that in 1950 a school can be controlled by the same principles which prevailed in 1925.

The reason is that there is no constancy in his own philosophy; where there is a permanent principle of truth, it is equally absurd to suppose that a school in 1950 could be operated on a basic philosophy, radically different from that governing in 1925. But an idea such as this is not part of the writer's understanding, nor does he understand Mr. Pilkey. For the headmaster of the Academy is a man who almost invariably does

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what he thinks is best for his school, his faculty and his students, which is a fact to which Mr. Burns does not devote enough consideration. For his mistakes, Mr. Pilkey is, as the old saying goes, more to be pitied than censured.

If I were a person whose philosophy of life was that of the author, I should have only one criticism to make. *Lucifer with a Book* was written too soon. Mr. Burns was not far enough removed from his experiences to be capable of relating them without an excess acidity. Consequently his attack is not pointed as directly as it might have been. His book is too long, and a few of his most acute and penetrating observations are obscured by paragraphs of unleashed fury which become rather tedious.

VIRGINIA VAUGHAN.

A Tree of Night and Other Stories. Truman Capote. Random House. $2.75.

THE SUM impression of these eight short stories by the author of the best selling *Other Voices Other Rooms* is as follows: while they are extremely well-written they are a slippery witchery collection. The usual theme seems to be pursuit—and escape. People are brought face to face and often overwhelmed by the unacknowledged desire and/or fear. When done well this is always an interesting theme. Capote matches logic with the perversely illogical. But his ideas are enshrined in technical fluency, tricks of impressionism and the like, and this makes it difficult to judge at first whether they are utter nonsense, ash from a psychoanalytic binge, or whether they should be taken seriously. The only argument for the latter it seems to me is that Capote takes his subjects to an undefinable area of the soul where usual standards are hard to apply. If this area exists any author who can exploit it has hit a goldmine where he cannot be assailed.

On the credit side is Truman Capote's feeling and capacity for the art of writing. He can express the inner eye, he can invoke, and his prose is careful and effective. It is also journalistic enough to be very easy and pleasant to follow. But what does he choose to see and to invoke and to select? A personal imagery which lacks meaning when brought out and considered in the light of day. These stories intrigue but do not satisfy.

VIRGINIA BENNETT.

All Sorts and Kinds. Christopher LaFarge. Coward-McCann. $3.00.

"THIS AGE will be known as the one where the word 'relax' has become the key to our civilization." This remark, by one of the rare heroes in Mr. LaFarge's collection of short stories, may or may not help to explain our time, but it does aptly indicate the tensile climate of most of the fiction in this book. In the course of reading these seventeen tales one is forever being tempted to say "Relax!" to the author: they are self-conscious, they are shrewdly contrived, they are mannered, they are brittle, and they are, usually, interesting.

At the end of each story Mr. LaFarge has recorded some details of its writings, of its marketing-or-not, and of his feeling toward it. After reading the stories and the notes you are left with the quite definite impression that he is an extremely careful craftsman and a highly talented teller of stories. But care may care too much, care may coat with precise powder the thrusting, unwashed hands of every-day life; while talent that is acutely and agoniz-

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Why the 25th Anniversary Fund?

The Commonweal, which is this year 25 years old, is currently conducting a Silver Anniversary campaign for funds. The purpose of this campaign is to obtain the financial resources which are necessary to meet those costs of operation not covered by normal revenue.

The goal is $50,000. This is the sum which must be raised now to assure continued publication of The Commonweal.

In the first few weeks, response to the Anniversary Fund appeal has been very encouraging. The Fund is now more than one quarter of the way toward its goal.

Will you join this campaign to save The Commonweal by contributing one or more $25 units to the Silver Jubilee Fund? Your contribution may be made in installments. We are depending on our readers to enable The Commonweal to carry on.

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ingly conscious of what it *should* do often becomes brightly—and merely—brittle in the doing.

Mr. LaFarge is expert in the complex and cautious fashioning of simple and reckless statement; there is an athletic breathlessness about his style. (The panting, deadly serious childishness of the athlete and the desperately achieved child-talk of grown-up intellectuals make a subject which should richly reward a Ph.D.-seeker.) His sentences are like relay races: each time the word "and" is reached, a fresh runner grabs the baton of meaning. I sometimes think that without the ampersand many of our modern realists would be neither modern nor real but merely old in a new way.

In all these shrewdly glittering stories—of growing-old-without-aging, of murder, of South Pacific fighting-without-music, of ambition's itch, of hunting, of beautiful-women-without-beauty, of top-drawer selfishness, of rich people, of wealthy people, of only-well-off-people, etc., etc.—there is only one that rings wholly true. It is "Mary Mulcahy," and it is very good. In fact I should say that it alone is worth the price of admission.

Your ticket admits you to a double feature. You'll see Mr. LaFarge's polished comment on our age: you'll also see the quite unpolished impact of our age on Mr. LaFarge.

MURRAY HICKEY LEY.

The Best of Times. Ludwig Bemelmans. Simon & Schuster. PC.TE.

LUDWIG BEMELMANS, master of wry gemütlichkeit, was commissioned by *Holiday* magazine to visit Europe in 1947-48 and record with brush and pen his findings. Believing that there is no such thing as bad people, only misguided and rotten governments, he set out to write a happy book. He found, however, little gaiety in Europe below the black-market level, although as always he is able to describe even the most predatory of our fellows (especially the frightful females who have inherited privilege without responsibility) with vividly mordant humor, finding always, whether to praise or dispraise, the startlingly apposite adjective or phrase. Bemelmans' paintings and drawings, scattered liberally through the text, have the same qualities: distorted, perhaps, by the artist's likes and dislikes but economically communicating so much, whether it be nostalgic approval or kindly of devastating satire.

DAVID BURNHAM.

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